ON THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERE *

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Abstract

I am presently working on an analysis of the historical constitution of the national public sphere. The case in question, Finland, may constitute a special case in Europe as it was a "late moderniser", but my presumption is that parallels can be drawn and applied to other countries too. My research question is: Despite more publicity and publicness today than ever before – why does the gap between decision makers and citizens continue to widen?

Liberal democratic theory bases on the assumption that the public sphere acts as a mediator between decision makers and citizens, and that the best guarantee for a healthy and democratic public sphere are independent mass media and other public institutions. During the last decades and especially in the last ten years there has been a multiplication of channels promoting publicity and publicness, all pledged to promote freedom of speech and other democratic values. All the evidence, however, shows that both the decision makers' distrust of citizens and the citizens' distrust of decision makers have almost dramatically increased just in the years of the expansion of these new channels of publicity and publicness.

I argue that the gap and its widening derive from the fact that the basic institutions of the national public sphere are so structurally preconditioned that they produce and reproduce hierarchical power relations between national elites and citizens. In order to explain these mechanisms we need better knowledge on the historical conditions of the formation of these institutions.

ON THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERE

I am presently working on an analysis of the historical constitution of what can be called "the national public sphere". My case in question, Finland, may constitute a special case in Europe as it was a "late moderniser" (see Alapuro 1988), but my presumption is that parallels can be drawn and applied in a general level to other countries too. In this paper I present ideas for the theoretical and conceptual outline of the analysis.

1. The aims and methodological framework of the analysis

The research question can be formulated: Despite more publicity and publicness today than ever before – why does the gap between the decision makers and citizens continue to widen?

The liberal democratic theory bases on the assumption that the public sphere acts as a mediator between decision makers and citizens, and that the best guarantee for a healthy and democratic public sphere are independent mass media and other public institutions. During the last decades and especially in the last ten years there has been a multiplication of channels promoting publicity and publicness, all pledged to promote freedom of speech and other democratic values.

All the evidence shows, however – and not only in Finland but in other European countries too – that both the decision makers' distrust of citizens and the citizens' distrust of decision makers have almost dramatically increased just in the years of the expansion of these new channels of publicity and publicness.

I argue that the gap and its widening derive from the fact that the basic institutions of the Finnish national public sphere are structurally preconditioned so that they produce and reproduce hierarchical power relations between national elites or decision makers and citizens or the subjects. In order to explain these mechanisms – the whys and hows – we need better knowledge on the historical conditions of the formation of these institutions.

The analysis has an overall emancipatory current. As it is not always clear what we mean by emancipation, one task is to clarify what would it mean from the point of view of critical-realistic analysis of the public sphere (see e.g. Garnham 2000; about emancipatory politics, see e.g. Giddens 1991, 210—214; Mouzelis 2001). The problem that the study seeks to solve is in the present, and answers are searched by critically reading historical studies and reviews from a certain present-based theoretically grounded perspective. Although the main sources will be studies in Finnish history, the study does not follow the methods of historical research. The use of primary sources is limited only to some examples. The basic methodological approach can best be characterised as *reconstructive*, implying both the present-ness and the theoretical disposition of the study.

In this paper I clarify the theoretical and analytical standpoints of the study and refer only anecdotally to the questions of both sources and the initial conclusions based on the first reading of the selected source material.

2. Concept of the public sphere and its problems

Despite the general adoption of the term "the public sphere" as equivalent to German "Öffentlichkeit" there remains uncertainty about their common conceptual coverage. "Öffentlichkeit" – as "julkisuus" in Finnish – refers to a constitutional contract between the Government and citizens, guaranteeing basic citizens' rights such as freedom of information and freedom of speech, etc. to all; this contract is materialised in the function of public institutions – the mass media, educational system, parliament, governmental institutions – which are open for public scrutiny and debate. Difficulty lies in that that in Britain no such contract exists, as the public domain as a whole – including the relationship between the Government and citizens – is under the privilege of the Crown. To put it short: in German "Öffentlichkeit" and in Finnish "julkisuus" refers to something that is known, something that is part of our historical imagination (Taylor 1992); in English such reference does not seem to exist (see Peters 1993,543—444; CPSR 2002). Thus it might be that the English use of the term "the public sphere" bears too much an aura of transcendental character – which does not seem to be the case in Finnish. (See e.g. Burger 1989; Peters 1993; Koivisto & Väliverronen 1996)

We can divide between two main strands in the study of the public sphere, the ideal-normative and the empirical-descriptive. The third strand, critical-realistic will be presented as an alternative for both of the former.

i) *The ideal-normative concept*: This is based on an ideal-type theoretical construction or model of the "original" or genuine public sphere which is then used in measuring how the "real" world public relationships match to the ideal. The prototype here is quite obviously Jürgen Habermas' theory of the structural transformation of the bourgeois public sphere (1989). Newer versions of the normative approach can be found in discussions on the Internet and its potential in establishing a new kind of the public sphere – virtual or cyber. (For arguments, see e.g. Poster 1995; Dahlberg 2001)

ii) *The empirical-descriptive concept:* This approach takes the public sphere as non-normative, having no special "origin" but presenting itself to us just in its empirically observable form. From this point of view, the public sphere consists of the functioning of public institutions – institutions that act in the public domain, such as the mass media, cultural establishments, educational institutions etc. – and of the representations that the institutions convey, such as the acts of politicians and celebrities, news and reports, advertisements, etc. – i.e. public "images". Here the questions asked are for example how the public sphere does function, why does it function as it does, what influence does it have to whom, how can we influence the public sphere, etc.

There has been several attempts to bridge the gap between the two main strands. Without empirical research, the ideal-normative approach is left abstract and repetitive. Without theoretical and methodological guidance, the empirical-descriptive approach is left superficial, utilised best by politicians and PR-consultancies. We can find at least three theoretically serious attempts to bridge the gap:

(i) The first is presented by Habermas himself in his later works, especially in "Between Facts and Norms" (1996). Here his idea of *proceduralism* includes giving up the normative universalistic claim of the public sphere and establishing the realisation of the public sphere by

procedural rules. Instead one homogeneous public sphere there might be a multitude of them but what is relevant is that their relations must be procedurally regulated. By these means he manages to show how democratic control could and should be extended and applied to more widely in the political process than is presently the case.

Although Habermas realises the problem between the ideal and the real his attempt is left rather abstract and programmatic. He cannot show how proceduralism can be applied empirically or how the public structures and institutions can be fundamentally transformed in practice in order to follow proceduralist programme.

(ii) The second strand is presented by the *critical political economists* in media and communication research. They follow Habermas' analysis of the paralysis of the public sphere because of dominance of the particular interests of media owners, political elites and other influential social groups. As the majority of public institutions – essentially the mass media – are guided by private interests, the essence of the public sphere which is the seeking of common interest through open critical public debate, is suppressed. From this point of view, the institutions that best serve the ideal of the public sphere are those unconnected and independent from private interests – an example of which are the media of public service broadcasting. Additionally, the same applies to the systems of public subsidies supporting the non-commercial media, in use in many countries, which make the publication of small circulation newspapers, magazines, and radio and television channels financially possible. (See e.g. Curran 2000)

The problem with this approach is that the public service broadcasting companies and the legislation sanctioning them have been established in many countries in order to carry out conservative cultural and political aims and to resist the influence of leftist and working class movements. The difficulty in defending the public service broadcasting is that in the name of pluralism of opinions we might find us defending an institution established for opposite purposes, i.e. to fight pluralism. (Discussion on this dilemma, see e.g. Garnham 1990)

(iii) The third strand is the promotion of *public or civic journalism*. Its protagonists have not adopted the pessimism of Habermas and the political economists concerning the democratic

capacity of civil society institutions. They aim at changing the media practices from within, by transforming the relationship between the mass media institutions and the public, and by these means creating critical publicity grounded on citizens' needs. Thus the mission of public journalism concerns the ethics of the media and journalism. Through sensitivising media professionals to the needs and aspirations of their public, the prevalent way of functioning of the media institutions could be democratised. (See Glasser 1999)

This approach faces, however, two problematic questions: Firstly, why should journalists adopt new ethical standards if prevailing professional ethics still works for them? Secondly, as the mass media is guided by financial interests, why would media owners support public journalism – unless it is more profitable than traditional journalism which does not seem very plausible?

3. Third way: the public sphere based on plurality of normative communities

In order to develop a historically grounded account of the development of the national public sphere in Finland, an analytical concept of the public sphere needs to be developed which avoids the pitfalls of the approaches assessed above.

One of the major problems with Habermas' original concept of the public sphere (see also his encyclopedia article, e.g. in Bronner & Kellner 1989b) concerns its universalistic claim, i.e. it presupposes a sort of *precontract* by which all participants gave up their particularistic interests in favour of a consensual pursuit of common good. As Habermas concluded (see 1989) this precontract remained valid, and the ideal-normative character of the public sphere realised, as long as the members of the public sphere came from the bourgeois middle classes, sharing more or less the same interests. Problems arose, however, as the public sphere and its institutions were entered by big bourgeoisie with monopolistic aims on the one hand and the working class movement on the other. No precontract could harness the particular interests any more and the basis of the ideal-normative public sphere collapsed.

Leaving aside the question of the accuracy of Habermas' historical account, the idea of precontract seems analytically fruitful. From its basis, we can initially formulate an argument:

The ideal-normative concept of the public sphere can be valid when applied to a social group sharing common interests and forming a normative non-hierarchical community. Examples may include different kind of voluntary associations and network communities, families, community groups etc., but also clubs and networks connecting decision makers – top politicians, high civil servants, tycoons of the industry and financial institutions etc. These group- or network-based public spheres, based on a more or less formally recognised precontract between the members, will be called here *core public spheres*.

The second argument follows from the first one: *The ideal-normative concept of the public sphere cannot be applied to relations between different normative communities*. This implies e.g. that the concept of the national public sphere must be developed under other premiss than the ideal-normative approach, as the concept of "a nation" inevitably comprises of a multiplicity of different normative communities who have different interests, i.e. who don't share the same normative ideals and who are in hierarchical relations to each other.

The precontract creates both inclusion and exclusion. Only those accepting the precontract of a certain core public sphere are included to its members and share equal rights and free access to its resources; the rest are excluded. As the precontract is based on non-hierarchy between the members or included, there cannot be but one category of members, making the partial acceptance of the precontract impossible.

As the main content of the precontract demands the members to give up their particular interests in favour of common good, the essence of the precontract is directed toward consensus. The problem now arises: *If all questions potentially harming the consensual thrust must be excluded from public debate as possible violations against the precontract, doesn't the precontract at least potentially act as a bar to open and critical debate?*

The only way to test and check the nature of the precontract in each case is to promote the plurality of core public spheres, forcing them to openly justify their differing normative precontracts. At this stage Habermas' concept of proceduralism may prove fruitful if understood as an attempt to establish a system of regulation between the core public spheres (based upon

some rules of universal character to gauge the acceptability of normative claims; see more in Habermas 1996).

4. Constitution of the national public sphere: three levels

For the purposes of our investigation, we can analytically divide the national public sphere into three levels, the everyday public sphere, the mediated public sphere, and the core public spheres.

The everyday public sphere (EPS) is difficult to observe and analyse as we live it in our daily life and it is always in flux, i.e. we produce it for ourselves over and over again. The EPS refers here to all such things and situations that unite people to each other in their everyday life or that people share in one way or another – although they may recognise and signify these things and situations in differing or even opposing ways. In this way, the EPSs are elemental in making and sustaining communities. The *foras* for the EPS are occasional meetings, discussions, events in a shop or in metro, chats over a cup of coffee with neighbours or relatives – including also arranged events such as concerts, neighbourhood meetings, weddings etc. The *topics* of the EPS are shared events or experiences – children in general or a particular child crying out loud; homeless in general or a drunken man in shopping mall; the Queen's 50 years in power; David Beckham's left foot; but also the level of taxation, the fate of the Palestinians, the future of the planet.

The media – the press, television, radio, advertisements, recorded music, videos etc. – serve today as an indispensable source for the topics of the EPS. The *significance* of the EPS is that through participating in it, we try to make sense of the world and our position in it at each moment. – As the EPS is for most part spontaneous and as such, it is not planned or structured beforehand; essential parts of it take place, however, in preconditioned, ritualised and institutionalised environments. The EPS is for most parts social participation for the sake of social purposes; but if suitable motive arises through the social intercourse, the EPS can lead to further action. In such a situation, the EPS shared by a group of people can occasionally take the task of the core public sphere. (Scannell's account of the role of the media in our everyday life might be read form the ESP point of view; see Scannell 1996)

The mediated public sphere (MPS) is embodied in all those institutions and institutional practices that stand as publicly representing something, i.e. they mediate between those represented and those to whom the representations are produced. For the daily functions of the everyday public spheres, most important MPS institutions are probably those servicing the tasks of social information and communication, i.e. the mass media, but equally essential are educational institutions, churches, associations. Many of the MPS institutions derive their representativeness from their national character, i.e. in order to reach the maximum audiences they claim acting in the name of national community, which is understood as including the whole population (living on a certain area) and being superior to all particular and private interests (in the name of national interest). (Respectively, the regional and local papers claim acting in the name of regional and local interests, common to all people living in the target area of their circulation.)

(a) The mediated public sphere is comprised of several *arenas*, separated by their subject issues and developmental histories. Such arenas include economy, politics, culture, social life (human interests), public (official) information, entertainment, advertisements, etc. Arenas have a certain semi-autonomous position – i.e. the public debate on economy is clearly distinctive from that of cultural issues; political publicity follows different discoursive rules as the publicity about arts and high culture; etc. At the same time there is constant interaction between these arenas, they influence continuously each other – the political discourse may borrow the patterns of a game show and the debate on economic questions adopts the patterns of PR-work, etc.

(b) There is a hierarchy between the arenas. On the top is the political arena which concerns the opinion building and will formation processes, leading to decision making. To put it crudely, through their pre-discussion in the political public sphere, the decisions that are to be made (pre-decided in the core public spheres as described below) are "legitimated" – through expert interventions and authoritative statements, through PR-campaigning and opinion polls, etc. (Examples in Finland include e.g. the referendum on joining the EU and the public campaigning leading to it in 1994; the parliamentary decision to licence the building of a new nuclear power station in 2002; the ongoing debate about Finland joining the NATO; etc.) The centrality of the

political arena lies with the fact that the decisions (concerning distribution and redistribution of societal resources) binding to all members of society are negotiated here.

The arena of economy presents itself more technical as it deals with apparently non-political issues – the market-based allocation of resources which, according to the principles of liberal democracy, is excluded from the sphere of politics. However, because the economy creates the "natural" limits and conditions for political decision making – i.e. in the arena of the economic public sphere it is defined what is possible and what is not, what is necessary and what is not – the public discourses concerning economy cannot be fundamentally separated form political discourses; vice versa, they can be seen lurking behind all the political speech.

The arenas of arts and culture concerns the public judgement of aesthetics and the values behind the "cultivated" way of life. The arena of entertainment – or popular culture – defines the "harmless" public topics and issues: it frames the area of "pure enjoyment" – where anybody can engage without the threat of feeling looked down, offended, degraded; in a way, it might be said that in the arena of popular culture, the public and the private mix.

Hierarchical relations between the arenas are mobilised through a refined network of interconnectedness, the examples of which can be find e.g. when the Prime Minister visits the Opera Festivals in Savonlinna and mingles there with the CEOs of big corporations; or the CEO of Nokia corporation renders a well publicised demand for lower taxes or else the company will move their headquarters from Finland or ex-athletes and other celebrities enter the parliament and even the Government; etc.

(c) The constitution of the MPS is closely linked with the rise of *the nation state* in Europe. In most countries, the basic institutions of the MPS were established in the process of nation building and as a part of national mobilisation of society – politically, economically, ideologically, culturally. If the everyday public sphere of the people was earlier still dominated by local and regional identities – in Finland, this was the case during the most of the 19th century – the emergence of the MPS institutions in a rather short period of time changed the structure of

the EPS: in the early years of the 20th century, a new concept of national citizenry brought new framework for identification. (See Alapuro 1988)

(d) Preliminarily we can state that, as a whole, the MPS serves a number of functions; it is a field for:

(1) competition and negotiation of particular interests (e.g. politics, PR-work, advertising),
(2) social coordination and resource allocation (politics, economy, news delivery),
(3) will formation and expression of public opinion (politics, opinion polls)
(4) promotion of social integration (educative and instructive publicity),
(5) critique and pressure against the power holders (advocacy, programmatic publicity),
(6) promotion of communality and solidarity (human interests, diversion),
(7) artistic creativity and personal expression (arts, culture),
(8) technical and administrative information (official announcements, governmental information),

This list above is not meant to cover all aspects; also it may include overlapping items. However, it can be used as indicative and creating basis for a typology according to which we can classify the main functions of the MPS into four main categories: instrumental, strategic, communicative and expressive functions (following freely Habermas' ideas in his Theory of Communicative Action; see 1984, 1987). *Instrumental* are those functions that deliver information of technical character, as with the case no. 8 above. *Strategic* functions are related to attempts to influence and persuade people to act in a certain manner, as with the cases no.1, 3, 5. *Communicative* are the functions that enhance the feelings communality and togetherness, as with the case no. 6. And *expressive* functions serve the aesthetic and artistic intentions, as with the case no. 7.

Different MPS institutions emphasise these functions differently. The mass media in general are a mixture of all functions, but within them works a certain division of labour: the *newspapers* are strong in instrumental and strategic functions; the *radio* combines instrumental and communicative functions (with specialised services for expressive functions); the *tabloids* and *magazines* fulfil mostly communicative function; *television* mixes strategic and communicative functions with some measure of expressive. In earlier historical phases the *voluntary associations*

had important communicative and strategic functions which today, however, have to a large measure melted away; other institutions, like educational system and churches, have still their own, mostly strategic, functions.

(e) The relationship between the mediated public sphere and everyday life is complex and historically changing. As the MPS started to evolve in most countries in the 19th century, it soon became indispensable source for the everyday public sphere. The impact of the MPS on everyday life varies between different individuals and social groups as their capacities to critically assess the MPS representations differs greatly. In principle, we adapt from our early age to everyday conventions with which we routinely make distinctions between different arenas of the MPS and the generic rules they use in their representations; this guides us to critically gauge the diverse truth and validity claims that different arenas present.

However, individuals and social groups are often in different positions in relation to their critical competence. In line with Pierre Bourdieu (e.g. in his *Distinction;* 1984) we can conclude that the higher the level of education, the better the subject is able to make distinctions between different arenas and different claims for truth and validity; and vice versa, the lower the level of education, the more difficult it is for him/her to separate between fact and fiction, advertisements and news etc., and critically assess the relevance of differing truth and validity claims.

The core public spheres (CPSs) are born out of the precontracts of normative communities described above. These precontracts can be either inherent, as in family or kinship relations, or explicit, as in voluntary associations. It appears difficult to render an exhaustive definition to the CSPs as they appear in many different forms:

i) some CPSs are closed, which means that there is no public record of their function (e.g. the case with corporate boards or many ministerial councils); additionally, some are even secret which means that there is not and should not be any public knowledge of their existence (e.g. many lobbying networks between industry and politicians),

ii) some CPSs are open in principle but closed in practice, as they master with such conceptual language which an outsider finds incomprehensible (e.g. different expert groups and academic communities),

iii) some CPSs exist formally so their action can be witnessed and analysed (e.g. sport clubs and neighbourhood associations),

iv) some CPSs are only informal networks based on occasional contacts, and cannot easily be subjected to any scrutiny (e.g. contacts between local politicians, bank managers and newspaper editors).

(a) From the point of view of the relationship between the CPSs and the mediated public sphere, it is crucial to note that all the representations in all different arenas of the MPS are results of the function of one or another core public sphere. The topics, the vantage points, the ways of presentation, the proposed interpretation are all results of the selection processes based on the function of one or another CPS. Tentatively we can apply here a Goffmanian approach where the CPSs represent the "backstage" and the MPS the "frontstage": before the appearance of a representation that we can observe in the frontstage of the MPS, a lot of unseen activity has taken place in the backstage, the processes of rehearsal and choosing that we can only guess but not openly observe. The rationale of the backstage decisions is that through them, the subject of the CPS (a normative community) aims at preconditioning the way how representations displayed in the MPS should be interpreted and signified. (See e.g. Goffman 1956)

(b) Characteristic to the core public spheres is that some of them have better access to the mediated public sphere than others, i.e. some normative communities are privileged in relation to public representation – in the event of competition between different communities, certain communities win more often than the others. If a systematic pattern of edging out of some CPSs (or normative communities) from representation in the mediated public sphere can be detected, we can suspect a structural bias against it. Examples of these kind of CPSs are today e.g. some environmental and anti-capitalist groups or movements which are critical to current processes of globalisation and militarisation.

The structurally excluded CPSs can – depending on their resources – build up either counter- or alternative public spheres, the difference being that counter public spheres aim at challenging the dominant MPS by exercising public criticism on the relevant area (e.g. foreign policy or military strategy) by whatever means they have an access to, whereas the alternative public spheres are

based on the withdrawal of their subject communities form the national MPS, attempting to establish alternative forms of social life, including the public sphere, independently from the dominant social system. Examples of the latter would be some environmentalist movements living in self-sustaining communities.

(c) The problem with the counter public spheres is that usually their subject normative communities are able to operate only on a single area of mediated public sphere where their critical potential has the most effect, but having no influence on other MPS areas. This contrasts to the dominant normative communities which, although concentrating their influence on certain single areas, are usually linked with other dominant normative communities operating on other areas of the MPS. As these links and networks of normative communities create what is called the national public sphere, it means that all those counter- and alternative public spheres which are not part of these links and networks are excluded from the national MPS and from the support and legitimacy that the dominant normative communities enjoy through their positive exposure on different arenas of the MPS.

(d) Following this mode of analysis, the main danger [for pluralistic public life] is that one or some of the normative communities (forming the CPSs) expand their influence over many MPS arenas and exercise coordinated regulative power over several arenas simultaneously, thus violating the principle of the relative autonomy of each arena. The more in number these arenas are and the more political importance they have, the closer the society is to the totalitarian public sphere. For example, we can say that in Nazi-Germany one of the keys to the National Socialists was their total control of the national MPS with all of its arenas – political, economic, cultural, entertainment etc. All the counter and alternative public spheres were violently excluded and their members eliminated. The same tendency applies to all totalitarian governments. A similar trend might be observed e.g. in Berlusconi's politics in Italy today.

The pluralistic public sphere means, respectively, that although there necessarily is interaction between different public arenas, e.g. between politics and economy or arts culture and entertainment, and there is some overlapping between individuals and social groups participating

in the CSPs on different arenas, no normative community attempts to dominate all the arenas of the MPS, i.e. the principle of their autonomy enjoys respect.

5. Problems with the mediation between the three levels: emancipatory approach?

From the point of view of the EPS the main problem is that we cannot know what is "behind" a mediated representation: at the moment of observation, we cannot be sure if the representation aims to fulfil an instrumental, strategic, communicative or expressive function. For the EPS, all representations appear first as realistic, they are part of our perceivable everyday environment; only in the process of signification or "making sense" we recognise their generic conventions and make judgements as to their functional character.

Basically, for the EPS, the problem is the naturalisation effect of mediated representations. By this we mean that as the public – sharing the common EPS – does not usually have neither the means to know the process of production of a certain representation nor to check its correspondence to reality, the public has no other possibility than to trust to whatever the representation itself claims to represent – i.e. that the representation "proves" something that we as members of the EPS have no means to check. (About the concept of naturalisation, see e.g. Hall 1982)

From this follows the problem of immediateness which does away with much of the contextual factors or the depth from the representations. The mass media – for example a newspaper – presents us daily with a huge field of representations divided in several sections; from the point of our observation, all the items are of equal quality – some pieces of news are longer and spread in several columns, some are just smaller. They are part of the same immediate reality and for our ESP, they are equal: we can discuss as passionately about the Eurovision song contest as about the fate of the Palestinians; David Beckham's left foot is given as much space in the paper as is President Bush's speech about new measures to increase national security in the U.S.

In this media-led process of signification the problem seems to be with the loss of sense of essentiality and relevance: if all the representations are of equal quality and they are offered by

the media as interchangeable, surely we know that some representations are more relevant and essential for us than some others. The counter argument would be, however, that the process of signification is much more complicated and that the media can only offer elements for this, but not determine the outcome – which is guided by the needs and abilities of individuals and their close communities and the kind of resources available for them.

This leads us to conclude that even if the areas of the MPS are by convention recognised and remarked in the ESP, in the processes of everyday public sphere – in occasional chats, discussions, gossipings etc. – the MPS representations are de- and re-contextualised, and the borders of the MPS arenas are transgressed. The sense making processes do not follow the patterns of compartmentalisation of the MPS.

If we accept that the basic meaning of critical research is emancipatory, i.e. that the aim is to increase people's competence to act for themselves, we take here as one of the factors for emancipation the ability to detect the naturalisation effect and to recognise the different functions of the MPS arenas and the way they interact with each other. It has been stated earlier in this paper that a central measure in this respect is the level of education: the higher the level of education, the more emancipatory competence the person has.

However, when applied to the functions of the three levels of the public sphere, it seems that we have a contradiction here. The level of education of a person is linked both with economic resources available and the parents' educational level. A conclusion that can be drawn in relation to the levels of the public sphere is the following: The higher the educational level, the more probable it is that the person is a member of such normative community and its CPS that can influence the presentations on the MPS arenas. Now the question is whom are the economically wealthy, highly educated members of the CPSs prone to emancipate – themselves or the rest of society? In relation to the Finnish historical experience, the former seems to have been the case.

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